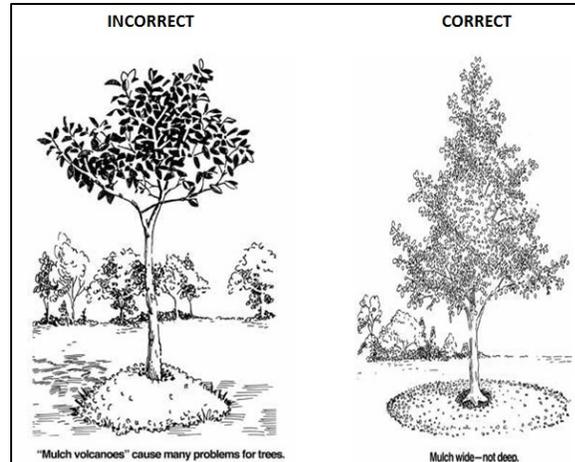


Mulch Volcanos and the Threats They Pose to Valuable Trees

Volcano mulching is an improper mulching technique where mulch is piled high against the trunk of the tree. Oddly enough, this is often seen in commercial landscapes. Mulch should never touch the trunk of the tree. The trunk was simply not meant to be covered and doing so invites decay and pests.



Volcano mulching may cause:

- *Disease and decay due to moisture retention on the trunk*
- *Insect and rodent damage*
- *Soil that is too dry since rain may not penetrate the thick mulch layer*
- *Failure to develop a normal root flare which stabilizes the tree. These trees may be more likely to fall during a storm.*

Proper mulching is very beneficial to trees. Spread mulch 2-4 inches deep to the drip line of the tree if possible; do not let the mulch touch the trunk. The mulch should form a flat, not mounded, donut, with the trunk in the center. Organic mulches (bark mulch, wood chips, leaves, etc) are preferred over stones or other inorganic products.

Benefits of mulch include:

- *Retains moisture. This is especially beneficial in warm weather.*
- *Stops soil from washing away.*
- *Organic mulch improves the soil as it decomposes.*
- *Keeps soil temperature more consistent- insulates against cold and heat.*

The natural mulch is leaf litter. The leaves contain nutrients that the plant has extracted from the soil and so are perfect soil amendments. Leaves are more likely to stay in place if they have been mowed or run through some type of shredder.

Please educate your neighbors and landscapers about this ill-informed practice.

Larger size



Improper Mulch
Root flare buried &
Mulch piled high up against the trunk



Proper Mulch
Root flare visible at the base of the tree &
Mulch extends to dripline of canopy